To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is not to remind you of the value of emergency communications which amateur radio operators provide, though I could write pages on the subject; this is about the other, less quantifiable value of the ARS that is threatened by BPL. I have been an amateur radio operator for nearly 12 years. Despite being only 23 years old, I have been active in many facets of the amateur service. To offer a few examples, I have offered my communications skills in numerous public service events, and I am a trained storm spotter for and provided emergency communications in the aftermath of severe weather. In addition, I have been active across the radio spectrum from 1.8 MHz to 24GHz, bounced signals off the moon and through satellites, and built many antennas and equipment. It is with this experience—and there are countless experiences like mine—that I have been following the potential threat from BPL technology.

Much of amateur radio involves reception of extremely weak signals—often an order of magnitude weaker than many of the unintentional radiators in my neighborhood. I, along with every other ham in world, have come to accept interference from Part-15 devices in my everyday operating. Clearly, we hams have come to accept some of this interference and we often take steps to minimize it at the source if possible. Since most of this interference tends to be narrowband, we can often avoid it by operating on a different frequency, but this is getting more and more difficult in urban environments. Given my current experimentation weak-signal DSP, even narrowband interference that is too weak to be audible causes significant problems.

BPL poses a much different threat. BPL will effectively raise the noise floor over a wide frequency range and mask those weak signals that amateurs are trying to receive. The reason I became a ham was the challenge of hearing and communicating with the creators of those weak signals. I'm sure if you ask others you will find many similar stories. The truth of the matter is that amateur radio operators don't become good communicators in an emergency by just passing and exam and obtaining a license. It comes from years of experience learning to uncover these signals in everyday operating. It comes from experimenting with new digital codes, learning about radio propagation, and building better antennas. In communicating with other amateurs each person learns a great deal about operating practices and how to adapt them to various situations. It is through these channels that one becomes a good communicator. Raising the noise floor at the receiver end poses a significant threat to these channels.

From my personal experience, I can tell you that I got my license because I liked the challenge of talking to people around the world using morse code and digging out those weak signals. That is where I learned to be an efficient operator. I must tell you that from the signal levels I have seen published in BPL studies would have made this utterly impossible, and this country would very likely be short one good operator. Then again, I did say that my experience wasn't unique. It is apparent to me that BPL has the potential to starve the input to what we all recognize as a valuable resource to our country.

Sincerely,
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